Editorial #4

Chris Bell died at the end of December 2009 in Syracuse. NY. Chris was an excellent friend and colleague, whose connection to Poland spanned quite a few years. He gave papers at queer studies conferences and at the annual convention of the Polish Association for American Studies: for the first time in Warsaw in 2002, then in Wroclaw and, for the last time, in Kamien Slaski in 2005. In the intervening years, he spent some time in Bielsko-Biala, where he taught. His conference papers and the classes he offered were among the first inroads that disability studies made in Poland. The fact that Chris chose to come to Poland, a country with an overwhelmingly white population, where he was the first person to thematize race as a political issue in the context of both queer studies and disability studies, has helped us become more aware of our peculiar optics and has put our whiteness into relief. Many people in Poland will remember Chris as a committed AIDS activist. His contribution on the emphasis on whiteness in LGBTQ activism is included in ////Out Here//, an anthology we published in 2006. Since 2006, he also served as a member of the editorial advisory board of InterAlia: A Journal of Queer Studies. He will be sorely missed.

Editors of InterAlia: Tomasz Basiuk, Dominika Ferens, Marzena Lizurej, Rafał Majka, Tomasz Sikora

The publishing of a journal, also an annual journal, carries its own exigencies, some of which have to do with timing. This matter of timing is complex: it encompasses the broader intellectual and political contexts as well as the contributors' and the editors' various paces of work. Our particular way of coping with these exigencies has been to postpone the announced thematic issue of InterAlia to early next year and to publish immediately the short presentations from Manchester (included here under a separate heading as part of the current issue). At this time, we are posting the three remaining articles unconnected with the Manchester seminar.

These three new papers carry their own exigencies. Angela Jones calls for something like queer spirituality, a call which might perhaps be understood along the lines of Foucault's care-of-the self. Jones posits a self-developmental project as an important theoretical and political facet in her "Queer heterotopias: homonormativity and the future of queerness." Her argument may itself portend a future issue of InterAlia, in which we would like to take issue with Lee Edelman's by now well known attack on futurity and with the anti-social turn in queer theory which it engendered, by focusing on queerness and sociality (see our CFP).

The other two articles are in Polish, and they, too, introduce their own exigencies. Urszula Nowak in "Dyskurs transseksualistyczny" takes up questions of transgenderism and identity in a way which attempts to bring together fairly abstract academic discourses and the rather practical concerns of transgendered persons in Poland, where transgenderism has only recently begun to be paid some mind in public speech. Joanna Giza-Stępień discusses poems by Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki in her "Życie jako literacki projekt tożsamościowy - poezja jako jedyne miejsce na ziemi." Tkaczyszyn-Dycki has just received the most prestigious Polish literary prize (Nike) for a tiny book of poems, many of which are openly homoerotic. He is a truly original voice in Polish letters, and has published a series of volumes that received well-deserved attention. Giza-Stępień attempts to sketch the poet's project of constructing a sense of self-identity through verse. Her piece is one of very few extended commentaries to have appeared on the poet's work, and it is the most consistent investigation of homoeroticism in his poems.

While thematically these three articles are rather disparate, each of them challenges some kind of border: Giza-Stępień examines attempts at constructing a sustainable homosexual identity within a conservative social and literary context; Nowak broadens this perspective by pointing at the "nodal" position of transgendered persons in relation to bodies, gender and sexuality; and Jones attempts to move queer theory beyond some received social categories by combining the discourses of spiritual journeying and personal development.

Editors